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230531Z Mar 01

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	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	BBG-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8489
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 001102

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER
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PARIS FOR BWILLIAMS
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PASS USAID FOR AFR/SD - DWELLER, AFR/SA - CPALMA,
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/11
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE'S COMMERCIAL FARMERS AGREE AT CONGRESS
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ON A STRATEGY TO RE-ENGAGE WITH THE GOZ ON LAND

REFS: A. HARARE 898, B. HARARE 815, C. HARARE 743

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D' AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) ON MARCH 22, ECONOFF MET WITH COLLIN CLOETE, VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMODITIES OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU), TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE CFU SPECIAL CONGRESS HELD THE PREVIOUS DAY. THE ISSUE OF REPLACING THE CURRENT CFU LEADERSHIP (REFS A, B AND C) WAS NOT RAISED AT THE CONGRESS, BECAUSE THE MEMBERSHIP WAS UNITED BEHIND THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP. NICK SWANEPOEL, A FORMER CFU PRESIDENT WHO HAD ENGAGED IN SECRET, UNSANCTIONED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ) ON THE LAND ISSUE (REF B), WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CONGRESS, FOLLOWING WHICH IT WAS DETERMINED THAT HE WILL PROCEED WITH HIS EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOZ IN A MODIFIED FASHION WITH THE BACKING OF THE CFU. THERE WAS A ONE AND A HALF HOUR PRESENTATION OF A NEW PLAN BY THE CFU LEADERSHIP TO RE-ENGAGE WITH THE GOZ ON THE ISSUES OF COMMERCIAL FARMING AND LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT, WITH SHORT-, MEDIUM-, AND LONG-TERM COMPONENTS. THE CFU HAS HELD REPEATED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FINANCE MINISTER, SIMBA MAKONI, ON THE LAND ISSUE, AND THE MEMBERSHIP VIEWS HIM AS THE ONE
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PERSON IN THE GOZ WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO BRIDGE THE SHARP DIVISION BETWEEN THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND THE GOZ. THE CFU IS PACKAGING THE PLAN UNVEILED AT THE CONGRESS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE GOZ, AND WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE FARMERS WANT TO ESTABLISH A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE LAND ISSUE AND HAVE SET NO PRECONDITIONS FOR SUCH TALKS. END SUMMARY.

A MORE PERFECT UNION

2. (C) CLOETE REVEALED THAT THE CFU HELD A FULL COUNCIL MEETING THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CONGRESS THAT WAS ATTENDED BY SWANEPOEL. SWANEPOEL AND THE COUNCIL MUTUALLY AGREED THAT EVIDENCE OF SCHISMS WITHIN THE CFU AT THE CONGRESS WOULD ONLY HURT COMMERCIAL FARMERS. IT WAS AGREED THAT SWANEPOEL WOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY AT THE CONGRESS TO PRESENT AND EXPLAIN HIS UNSANCTIONED AND SECRETIVE EFFORT TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE IMPASSE OVER LAND WITH

THE GOZ. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT HE WOULD NOT RAISE THE ISSUE OF REPLACING THE CURRENT CFU LEADERSHIP. CLOETE STATED THAT SWANEPOEL HAD NO CHOICE ON THE LATTER ISSUE FOR TWO REASONS: THE ASSOCIATION OF JOHN BREDENKAMP (A REPUTED ARMS DEALER WITH CLOSE TIES TO ZANU-PF) WITH HIS SECRET TALKS HAD CAUSED MANY FARMERS TO QUESTION THE

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REAL MOTIVES BEHIND SWANEPOEL'S EFFORT, AND, THE RESULTS OF THE CFU LEADERSHIP'S CANVASSING OF OVER 1000 FARMERS IN THE WEEKS BEFORE THE CONGRESS, WHICH REVEALED NEAR UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR THE INCUMBENT LEADERSHIP.

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13. (C) THE CONGRESS THE FOLLOWING DAY WENT VERY SMOOTHLY. THE CFU PRESIDENT, TIM HENWOOD, OPENED WITH A 15 MINUTE SPEECH, FOLLOWED BY SWANEPOEL WITH A 20 MINUTE EXPOSITION ON HIS TALKS, FOLLOWED BY A ONE-AND-A-HALF HOUR PRESENTATION OF THE CFU PLAN TO RE-ENGAGE THE GOZ ON THE LAND ISSUE, WHICH WAS GIVEN BY CFU VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGIONS, WILLIAM HUGHES. AFTER THE PRESENTATION, THERE WAS AN OPEN PERIOD OF Q & A'S WITH THE LEADERSHIP OVER THE PLAN, WITH A FEW QUESTIONS DIRECTED TO SWANEPOEL REGARDING HIS DEALINGS WITH THE GOZ. AT THE END OF THE DAY-LONG CONGRESS THERE WAS A UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS BY THE DELEGATES FOR THE LEADERSHIP TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PROPOSED PLAN.

THE PLAN

14. (C) THE PLAN PRESENTED BY THE CFU LEADERSHIP IS A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO ENGAGING THE GOZ ON THE QUESTIONS OF THE FUTURE OF COMMERCIAL FARMING, LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT. THE PLAN IS DIVIDED INTO SHORT-, MEDIUM, AND LONG-TERM COMPONENTS DEALING WITH ALL ASPECTS OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE AND LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT. IN A BROAD STROKE, THE KEY ELEMENTS

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OF THE PLAN ARE COMMITMENTS BY THE CFU AND COMMERCIAL FARMERS TO: WORK WITH THE GOZ TO SEE THAT LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT IS A SUCCESS IN ZIMBABWE; INTEGRATE THE CFU FULLY INTO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FABRIC OF THE NATION; ASSIST SMALL-SCALE AND COMMUNAL FARMERS TO BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE; AND DEVELOP FINANCIAL MECHANISMS WITH BANKS, IFIS, AND DONOR COUNTRIES TO FUND LAND REFORM, RESETTLEMENT, AND COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE. AS PART OF THE EFFORT TO INTEGRATE MORE FULLY INTO PRESENT-DAY ZIMBABWE, THE CFU WILL VIGOROUSLY PURSUE EFFORTS TO BROADEN ITS MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE THE MEMBERS OF THE INDIGENOUS COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION AND SMALL-HOLDER FARMERS ENGAGED IN

COMMERCIAL FARMING, AND TO DEVELOP A NEW CFU CONSTITUTION AND SYMBOLS THAT WILL BE PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION AT THE AUGUST CONGRESS. CLOETE STATED THAT THE CFU IS NOW PREPARING THIS PLAN FOR FORMAL PRESENTATION TO THE GOZ. THE PLAN DOES NOT INCLUDE SPECIFIC FIGURES LISTED AS GOALS, BECAUSE ZANU-PF CONTACTS TOLD THE CFU LEADERSHIP THAT IT WAS BETTER TO LEAVE THIS OPEN FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOZ. CLOETE SAID THAT THERE WAS NOT A SPECIFIC DATE FOR PRESENTING THE PLAN TO THE GOZ. IT WILL BE PRESENTED AS SOON AS THE UNION HAS IT PROPERLY PACKAGED FOR PRESENTATION.

A ROLE FOR SWANEPOEL

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15. (C) THE CONGRESS ALSO AGREED THAT THERE WAS SOME MERIT IN THE SECRET EFFORT THAT SWANEPOEL HAD BEGUN, AND AUTHORIZED HIM TO SPEAK FOR THE UNION AND ITS MEMBERSHIP IN HIS ROLE AS THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE FORUM (NECF) TASK FORCE ON LAND. ACCORDING TO CLOETE, WHILE THIS IS A POSITION SWANEPOEL HAS FILLED FOR THE LAST YEAR, HE HAD ILLEGALLY USURPED IT FROM A CFU-BACKED DELEGATE. WHILE THE NECF TASK FORCE HAS BEEN LARGELY INACTIVE SINCE THE FARM INVASIONS BEGAN LAST YEAR, THE CFU LEADERSHIP IS HOPING THAT IT MAY BECOME THE FORUM FOR REENGAGING THE GOZ WITH THE NEW PLAN.

MAKONI SEEN AS A KEY PLAYER

16. (C) ACCORDING TO CLOETE, THE CFU HAS BEEN QUIETLY CULTIVATING CONTACTS WITH THE FINANCE MINISTER, SIMBA MAKONI. THEY VIEW HIM AS A KEY GOZ OFFICIAL WHO, BECAUSE OF HIS ROLE IN TRYING TO STABILIZE THE ZIMBABWE ECONOMY, MAY HAVE SUFFICIENT INFLUENCE WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE AND HIS CIRCLE OF ADVISORS TO HELP GET BOTH SIDES SERIOUSLY TALKING AGAIN. THE CFU LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT MAKONI UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE PLAYS IN THE ECONOMY, AND THAT IT IS ONE SECTOR THAT CAN BE QUICKLY STIMULATED TO GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS, AND EMPLOYMENT, AS WELL AS FEED THE NATION. FOR THIS REASON THE CFU PLAN TO USE MAKONI AS A CONDUIT TO PRESENT THEIR NEW PLAN TO MUGABE.

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WILL THE GOZ RESPOND?

17. (C) CLOETE SAID THAT ONCE THE CFU PLAN IS PRESENTED TO THE GOZ, THE BALL IS IN THE LATTER'S COURT. HOWEVER, TO ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE RESPONSE THE CONGRESS AGREED THAT THE CFU MUST MAKE CLEAR TO PRESIDENT MUGABE THAT IT WANTS TO BE A HELPFUL PARTNER IN RESOLVING THE IMPASSE OVER LAND, THAT IT IS SETTING NO PRECONDITIONS TO TALK, AND THAT THE UNION WILL PURSUE NO ADDITIONAL LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST THE GOZ. THE CFU IS GOING TO USE ALL AVENUES TO GET THEIR MESSAGE ACROSS TO MUGABE AND THE GOZ, INCLUDING INVOLVING THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA. THE CFU WILL TRY TO DO THIS OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE, HOPING THAT THEY CAN CONVINCE MUGABE THAT HE CAN ENGAGE WITH THE UNION AND COMMERCIAL FARMERS IN A WIN-WIN SITUATION THAT WILL ALLOW HIM TO TAKE CREDIT FOR SOLVING THE LAND ISSUE. CLOETE STATED THAT THE CFU RECOGNIZES THAT THIS LAST POINT IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF THEIR PLAN, BECAUSE IF MUGABE AND ZANU-PF CANNOT SUCCESSFULLY USE THE LAND ISSUE TO TRY AND REGAIN POPULAR SUPPORT, THE NEW PLAN WILL BE STILLBORN.

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COMMENT

18. (C) IN OUR OPINION, THE ACTION PLAN AGREED TO AT THE SPECIAL CONGRESS IS A COMPREHENSIVE AND WELL-THOUGHT OUT STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT IN ZIMBABWE, WHILE MAINTAINING THE VIABILITY OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE. WHETHER THE CFU LEADERSHIP WILL BE ABLE TO GET PRESIDENT MUGABE TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THE PLAN, AND THEN TO WORK WITH THE FARMERS IN FINDING A WAY FORWARD WILL DEPEND ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH MUGABE CAN CLAIM PERSONAL AND ZANU-PF CREDIT FOR GIVING LAND TO THE BLACK MAJORITY AS A RESULT. THE ROLE THAT MAKONI MAY PLAY IN PROMOTING THIS PLAN TO MUGABE WILL BE CRITICAL. HE HAS A LIMITED WINDOW IN WHICH TO DO SO BECAUSE WE FIGURE THAT AFTER JUNE THE MAJORITY PARTY WILL BE FOCUSED ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TO THE EXCLUSION OF ALMOST ALL OTHER ISSUES. THE SEVERE ECONOMIC CRISIS FACING ZIMBABWE GIVES MAKONI SOME LEVERAGE IN THIS EFFORT, BUT IT MAY NOT SUFFICE TO OVERCOME THOSE IN ZANU-PF, INCLUDING MUGABE HIMSELF, WHO SEE THE CURRENT "FAST-TRACK" LAND PROGRAM AS THE ONLY WAY TO INCREASE THE PARTY'S, AND ITS CANDIDATE'S, POPULARITY PRIOR TO THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. END COMMENT.

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